

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of:

Tsunezuki TSUJI, et al.

Application No.: 09/964,637

Group Art Unit: 2145

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Examiner: Patrice L. Winder

For: INFORMATION BROWSE SUPPORTING METHOD AND INFORMATION BROWSE
SUPPORTING SYSTEM AND PROGRAM

APPEAL BRIEF UNDER 37 CFR § 41.37

Commissioner for Patents

Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences

United States Patent and Trademark Office

PO Box 1450

Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

The following comprises the Appellant's Brief on Appeal from the final rejection, dated February 15, 2007, of claims 1-6, 8-14, and 16-20. This Appeal Brief is accompanied by the required appeal fee set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 41.20(b)(2). Appellant's Notice of Appeal was filed on May 15, 2007. A Petition for a one-month extension of time, together with the requisite fee for same, is submitted herewith, thereby extending the period for filing the Appeal Brief to August 15, 2007.

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I. Real Party in Interest (37 CFR §41.37(c)(1)(i))

The above-captioned application is assigned in its entirety to Fujitsu Limited having a corporate situs of 1-1, Kamikodanaka 4-chome, Nakahara-ku, Kawasaki-shi, Kanagawa 211-8588, Japan.

II. Related Appeals and Interferences (37 CFR §41.37(c)(1)(ii))

Appellant states that, upon information and belief, Appellant is not aware of any co-pending appeal or interference that will directly affect, be directly affected by, or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

III. Status of Claims (37 CFR §41.37(c)(1)(iii))

Claims 7 and 13-15 were cancelled. Claims 1-6, 8-12, and 16-20 are pending in the application. Claims 1-6, 8-12, and 16-20 stand rejected. The rejection of claims 1-6, 8-12, and 16-20 is being appealed.

IV. Status of Amendments (37 CFR §41.37(c)(1)(iv))

An Amendment is concurrently filed herewith cancelling claims 13 and 14.

V. Summary of Claimed Subject Matter (37 CFR §41.37(c)(1)(v))

The presently claimed emphasizes as system and method for creating a search condition which searches for information inputted for searching for information for a first user and creating a second search inputted by any user which specified a search for a second user, them combining the results of the search for display. The system and method include:

independent claim 1, which recites " 1. An information browse method (e.g. page 10 line 27 and Fig.1 reference mark 10) comprising: a first search condition information setting step of setting a condition (e.g. Fig. 2), inputted by any one user among a plurality of users, for searching for information suited to a first user, as first search condition information on this first user (e.g. page 14 lines 12-24); a second search condition information setting step of setting a condition, inputted by any one among the plurality of users in a way that specifies a second user, for searching information suited to this second user, as second search condition information on this second user (e.g. page 14 line 25 through page 15 line 11 and Fig. 3) ; an information searching step of searching, from within browsing target information containing a plurality of information elements, for an information element with respect to a certain user in accordance with information derived from the first search condition information set in said first search condition information setting step (e.g. Fig. 9 reference mark S401, page 29 lines 1-3) and information derived from the second search condition information set in said second search condition information setting step (e.g. Fig. 9 reference mark S401, page 29 lines 3-6); and an information presenting step of presenting to the certain user a piece of information corresponding to a searched result with respect to the certain user in said information searching step (e.g. Fig. 9 reference mark S403, page 30 lines 5-9);

independent claim 6, which recites 6. An information browse method (e.g. page 10 line 27 and Fig.1 reference mark 10) comprising: a first search condition information setting step of making a server set information (e.g. Fig. 2) inputted by a first user as a search condition corresponding to a first user (e.g. page 14 lines 12-24); a second search condition information setting step of making said server set information by a second user as a search condition corresponding to a certain user (e.g. page 14 line 25 through page 15 line 11 and Fig. 3); a step of receiving from said server a result of searching based on the conditions set corresponding to information derived from the first and second users in said first and second search condition information setting steps (e.g. Fig. 9 reference mark S403, page 30 lines 5-9); and

independent claim 8, which recites 8. An information browse system method (e.g. page 10 line 27 and Fig.1 reference mark 10) comprising: a first search condition information storing unit of storing information (e.g. Fig. 2), inputted by any one of a plurality of users, for searching for information suited to a first user, as first search condition information on this first user (e.g. page 14 lines 12-24); a second search condition information storing unit of storing information, inputted by any second one of the plurality of users in a way that specifies a second user, for searching information suited to this second user, as second search condition information on this second user (e.g. pages 14 line 25 through page 15 line 11 and Fig. 3); an information searching unit for searching, from within browsing target information containing a plurality of information elements, for an information element with respect to a certain user in accordance with information derived the first search condition information stored in said first search condition information storing unit (e.g. Fig. 9 reference mark S401, page 29 lines 1-3) and information derived the second search condition information stored in said second search condition information storing unit for information retrieval and sharing (e.g. Fig. 9 reference mark S401, page 29 lines 3-6); and an information-presenting unit of presenting to the certain user a piece of information corresponding to a searched result with respect to the certain user by said information-searching unit (e.g. Fig. 9 reference mark S403, page 30 lines 5-9).

VI. Grounds Of Rejection To Be Reviewed On Appeal (37 CFR §41.37(c)(1)(vi))

The grounds of rejection for review are:

- A. Rejection of claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-10, 12-14, and 16-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis et al. , U.S. Patent No. 6, 898,762 in view of Cooper et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,754,904.**
- B. Rejection of claims 4 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis and Cooper as applied to claims 3 and 10 above, and further in view of Haken, U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0008972.**

VII. Argument of Each Ground of Rejection Presented for Review (37 CFR §41.37(c)(1)(vii))

A. Rejection of claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-10, 12-14, and 16-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis et al. , U.S. Patent No. 6, 898,762 in view of

In the Final Office Action mailed February 15, 2007, at page 2, item 2, the Office rejected claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8-10, 12-14 and 16-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Ellis, U.S. Patent No. 6,898,762 in view of Cooper, U.S. Patent No. 6,754,904.

Ellis discusses a system for providing an interactive program guide to a user where a parent can set a parental lock on a program. Cooper discusses a system for displaying information television programming viewed by another. In contrast the present application discusses performing a first search based on search information specified by a first user and allowing a second search by a second search information specified by another user and combining that information for display.

1. The Examiner erred by failing to provide evidence that the claim features exist in the prior art or are obvious thereof.

a. Independent claims 1, 6 and 8

On page 2, item 3 of the Office Action, it is stated that Ellis, column 18, lines 32-39 teach or suggest “a second search condition information setting step of setting a condition, inputted by any one among the plurality of users in a way that specifies a second user, for searching information suited to this second user, as second search condition information on this second user,” as in claim 1. Ellis, column 18, lines 32-39 states

The program guide may also provide users with an opportunity to parentally control titles, programs, or channels using boolean or natural language expressions. If desired, **program guide server 25 may parentally control programs based on user preference profiles.** A user may indicate a desire to parentally control titles, programs, or channels by, for example, selecting a selectable Parents feature 106 from main menu 102 of FIG. 5. [Emphasis added]

Further, Ellis at column 18 lines 63-66 states

The program guide client may, for example, indicate that a program is locked by **displaying lock indicator 161 when displaying locked listings in a listing screen,** as shown, for example, in FIG. 7. [Emphasis added]

Thus, what Ellis discusses is a program guide that is the same for a parent or child based on the Boolean or natural language search (“first search condition”). The search only

indicating that some programs may be locked out. Thus, there is not a second search condition that shows only those program which are not blocked. Therefore, "setting a second search condition, inputted by any one among the plurality of users in a way that specifies a second user, for searching information suited to this second user, as second search condition information on this second user," is not taught or suggest by Ellis.

In the Office Action at page 3, the Examiner states that "Ellis does not specifically teach second search condition information inputted by any one among the plurality of users in a way that specifies a second user," however, the Examiner alleges Cooper does. Cooper at column 5 line 54 - column 6 line 5 states:

FIG. 7 shows **a process for tuning the set-top system based on a received link**. After receiving an EPG 700. The client receives a message including a link that is a reference to a television channel feature (e.g., a network or a show) 702, user selection of a link 704 causes set-top box software to determine tuning information corresponding to the link 706, for example, by looking-up the information in an EPG. The software tunes 710 the set-top box to the determined tuning channel.

In some embodiments, **the process may enforce parental controls 708 over the type of programming different family members can view**. For example, America Online enables a parent to create user names for family members and associate different privileges to each of the user names. For example, a parent can configure the family member accounts such that a child has privilege only to see TV programs having a "G" (General) rating while a teenager has privileges to see TV programs having a "G" or "PG" (Parental Guidance suggested) rating. [Emphasis added]

Thus, what Cooper discusses is a user receiving a message with a link. Upon clicking through the link the user would be brought to the program. Cooper further discusses the parental controls (i.e. "first search condition") prevents arrival at the program. The enforcement of parental control ("first search condition") does not suggest that a second search is performed, only that the user may not access the program. Further, the parental enforcement discussed above does not state there is a separate (i.e. second search condition) view of the program guide for a child.

Therefore, the combination of Cooper and Ellis does not teach or suggest "setting a second search condition, inputted by any one among the plurality of users in a way that specifies a second user, for searching information suited to this second user, as second search condition information on this second user," as in claim 1.

Further, claim 6 recites "a second search condition information setting step of making said server set information by a second user as a search condition corresponding to a certain user," and claim 8 recites "a second search condition information storing unit of storing information, inputted by any second one of the plurality of users in a way that specifies a second user, for searching information suited to this second user, as second search condition information on this second user." The cited art as discussed above fails to teach these features of claims 6 and 8.

Claim 1 also recites " setting a condition ... for searching for information suited to a first user ... setting a condition ... for searching information suited to this second user ... searching ... for an information element with respect to a certain user in accordance with information derived from the first search condition information set in said first search condition information setting step and information derived from the second search condition information set in said second search condition information setting step; and ... presenting to the certain user a piece of information corresponding to a searched result with respect to the certain user in said information searching". That is, the presentation is of information resulting or derived from the first condition and the second condition.

The Examiner points to Ellis and Cooper for the presenting. In particular, the Examiner pointed to Ellis at column 22, lines 62-67 and col. 23, lines 15-21 which state:

Reminders may be scheduled based on the results of the search (step 2230). Program guide server 25 may, for example, store reminder information (e.g., program identifiers and air times) at step 2235 and send messages to the program guide client at an appropriate time before a program starts. In another suitable approach, program guide server 25 may process an expression and provide program identifiers and air times to the program guide client. Programs may be parentally locked based on the expression results (step 2250). Program guide server 25 may, for example, store parental control information (e.g., program identifiers in a database, table, or list of programs to be locked) at step 2260. Program guide server 25 may indicate to the program guide client that programs are locked when providing program listings to the program guide client.

In particular, the Examiner pointed to Cooper at column 5, line 63-column 6, line 5 which states:

In some embodiments, the process may enforce parental controls 708 over the type of programming different family members can view. For example, America Online enables a parent to create user names for family members and associate different privileges to each of the user names. For example, a parent can configure the family member accounts such that a child has privilege only to see TV programs having a "G" (General) rating while a teenager has privileges to

see TV programs having a "G" or "PG" (Parental Guidance suggested) rating.

As can be seen, Ellis and Cooper say nothing about making a presentation of information obtained in a search based on two search conditions where the two search conditions are for information for different users as recited in claim 1.

Further, claim 6 recites "set information inputted by a first user as a search condition corresponding to a first user ... set information by a second user as a search condition corresponding to a certain user ... receiving from said server a result of searching based on the conditions set corresponding to information derived from the first and second users"; and claim 8 recites "storing information ... for searching for information suited to a first user, as first search condition information on this first user ... for searching information suited to this second user, as second search condition information on this second user ... searching ... for an information element with respect to a certain user in accordance with information derived the first search condition information ... and information derived the second search condition information ... and ... presenting to the certain user a piece of information corresponding to a searched result with respect to the certain user." The cited art as discussed above fails to teach these features of claims 6 and 8.

Accordingly, Appellant respectfully submits that the combination of Ellis and Cooper, separately or in combination fails to teach or suggest the features recited in claims 1, 6 and 8.

b. Dependent claims 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12-14 and 16-20

Claims 2, 3, 5, 13, 14 and 16-20 are deemed patentable due at least to its dependence from independent claim 1. Accordingly, Appellant respectfully submits that claims 2, 3, 5, 13, 14, 16-20, which ultimately depend from independent claim 1, should be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claims 9, 10 and 12 are deemed patentable due at least to its dependence from independent claim 6. Accordingly, Appellant respectfully submits that claims 9, 10 and 12, which ultimately depends from independent claim 6, should be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 6.

Further, claim 2 calls for "presenting a piece of information indicating a setting user set as one element of mapping by way of the second search condition information with respect to the respective information elements searched based on the second search condition

information". That is, the display indicates who set the particular condition. Claim 9 recites a similar feature. The Examiner points to Ellis at column 18, lines 58-66 which state:

Program guide server 25 may process the expression, determine all of the programs that meet the expression, and indicate the programs that are locked to the program guide client when providing program listings to the program guide client using a suitable indicator (e.g., "locked" tag contained in the listings information). The program guide client may, for example, indicate that a program is locked by displaying lock indicator 161 when displaying locked listings in a listing screen, as shown, for example, in FIG. 7.

This text says nothing about indicating who set a particular condition as recited in claims 2 and 9.

Further, claim 3 calls for "searching, based on the second search condition information set by the certain user with respect to second user in said second search condition information setting step, for an information element suited to this second user from the browsing target information, and checking whether or not the thus searched information element is searched by the first search condition information set in said first search condition information". That is, the system checks to see if the information searched by the two searched conditions is the same. Claim 10 calls for a similar feature. The Examiner points to Ellis at column 18, lines 58-66 which is set forth above.

This text says nothing about checking to see if the conditions search for the same search element as recited in claims 3 and 10.

Claim 5 calls for "generating the second search condition information by analyzing natural language information inputted in such a way that any one of the plurality of users specifies the second user". Claim 12 recites a similar feature. The Examiner points to Ellis at column 18, lines 32-39 which states:

The program guide may also provide users with an opportunity to parentally control titles, programs, or channels using boolean or natural language expressions. If desired, program guide server 25 may parentally control programs based on user preference profiles. A user may indicate a desire to parentally control titles, programs, or channels by, for example, selecting a selectable Parents feature 106 from main menu 102 of FIG. 5.

This text says nothing about the features associated with specifying the second user recited in claims 5 and 12.

Claim 16 recites "a control unit determines a recommendation degree corresponding to a hit keyword count with respect to each of the searched information elements searched using

the first search condition and the second search condition". The Examiner points to Ellis at column 13, lines 3-16 which states:

In the example of FIG. 9a, the user has constructed a boolean expression for all action programs that have the actor Bruce Willis, that start between 7:00P and 11:00P, and that end between 9:00P and 1:30A on the current day. FIG. 9a has not been shown as including criteria for selecting what program guide server 25 searches for to avoid over-complicating the drawing. The program guide client may display criteria screen 149 of FIG. 9b to provide a user with an opportunity to construct a natural language expression. The user may enter a natural language phrase, such as "List in alphabetical order all action programs starring Bruce Willis and that start today between 7:00P and 11:00P and that end between 9:00P and 1:30A" using user interface 46 (FIG. 4).

This text says nothing about the hit key word count features recited in claim 16.

Claim 17 calls for "a recommendation degree is derived using data from a care-for-others information table and/or a favorite information table". The Examiner points to Ellis at column 16, lines 34-44 which states:

When faced with two different preference levels associated with the same program, the program guide uses the stronger of the two. My Stepmother is an Alien is included, for example, because it has a "strong like" preference attribute that outweighs the "weak dislike". An illustrative program listings screen that may be displayed by the program guide client with such limited program guide data is shown in FIG. 16b. In practice, a listings screen generated based on a profile that is set to moderate scope may typically include a larger number of program listings depending on the mandatory attributes set by the user.

This text says nothing about the table features recited in claim 17.

Claim 18 calls for "a program having a larger hit keyword count in the care-for-others information table takes a larger recommendation degree value" while claim 19 calls for "information displayed in a program guide are sorted in a format corresponding to the recommendation degree of each item". The Examiner points to Ellis at column 16, lines 34-44 which text is set forth above. This text says nothing about the larger recommendation based on larger hit count of claim 18 or the sorting feature of claim 19.

Claim 20 calls for "said control unit receives electronic mail communications addressed to a logged-in user". The Examiner points to Ellis at column 12, lines 43-51 which states:

Program guide server 25 may obtain, for example, video-on-demand programs, web site links, games, chat group links, merchandise information, or any other suitable information or programming from data sources 14 located at main facility 12 or other facilities. The program guide client may provide users with an opportunity to access, modify, or delete the expressions if desired.

This text says nothing about the receiving of email as recited in claim 20.

Claim 20 also calls for "said control unit reads all keywords entered into the favorite information table related to the logged-in user, and further reads all keywords entered into the care-for-others information table related to the logged-in user". The Examiner points to Ellis at column 12, lines 52-65 which states:

A user may indicate a desire to search program guide data by, for example, selecting selectable Search feature 106 of main menu 102 (FIG. 5). In response, the program guide client may display a criteria screen, such as illustrative criteria screen 141 and 149 of FIGS. 9a and 9b. The program guide client may display criteria screen 141 of FIG. 9a to provide a user with an opportunity to define a boolean expression. The user may construct a boolean expression by selecting criteria such as attribute types, attributes, logical operators, and sorting criteria. User selectable criteria may also include what program guide server 25 searches for such as, for example, program listings, program information, web sites, video-on-demand videos, software, or any other suitable program guide data, other information, or videos.

This text says nothing about the receiving of email or the use of a table as recited in claim 20.

Claim 20 also calls for "said control unit searches the electronic mail communications for the keywords set in the favorite information table and in the care-for-others information table; said control unit executes the process of computing the recommendation degree of each of the electronic mail communications wherein the electronic mail communications are displayed according to a format corresponding to the recommendation degree for each item". The Examiner points to Ellis at column 13, lines 17-26 which state:

The program guide client may submit the user defined boolean expression or the natural language expression to program guide server 25 for processing. Program guide server 25 may process the expression, and provide the resulting program guide data (e.g., program listings, program information, software, Internet links, etc.) or video programs to the program guide client for display. FIG. 11 shows an illustrative program listings screen that may be displayed by the program guide client in response to the expressions defined in FIGS. 9a and 9b.

This text says nothing about the searching of a table or displaying email based on recommendation degree as recited in claim 20.

It is submitted that claims 2, 3, 5, 13, 14 and 16-20 are patentably distinctive for the reasons discussed above.

B. Rejection of claims 4 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis and Cooper as applied to claims 3 and 10 above, and further in view of Haken, U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0008972.

In the Final Office Action mailed February 15, 2007, at page 6, item 12, the Office rejected claims 4 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Ellis and Cooper as applied to claims 3 and 10 above, and in further view of Haken, U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2004/0008972.

1. The Examiner erred by failing to provide evidence that the claim features exist in the prior art or are obvious thereof.

a. Dependent claims 4 and 11

Claims 4 and 11 are deemed patentable due at least to its depending from claims 1 and 6 respectively, as well as for the additional features recited therein. Accordingly, Appellant respectfully submits that claims 4 and 11, which ultimately depend from independent claims 1 and 6, should be allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 1 and 6, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

Further, claim 4 calls for "wherein the first search condition information contains one or more pieces of information consisting of a keyword and a confidential flag for indicating whether or not a permission of using this keyword is given to the second user, and said second information searching step involves performing the check about the searched information element by use of only the keyword having such a relationship that the confidential flag contained in the first search condition information set in said first search condition information setting step with respect to the second user indicates the permission of the first user". Claim 11 calls for similar features. The Examiner points to Haken for these features at paragraphs 9 and 34 which state:

0009] According to one aspect, the present provides a memory associated with a programmable TV recorder storing computer readable instructions for programming a processor to monitor an input port capable of receiving schedule and software updates for a recommendation, to extract a username from the recommendation, to compare the extracted username to a stored usernames, and to output the recommendation to a list when the processor determines that the stored usernames include the extracted username. In an exemplary case, the list includes the recording schedule. In another exemplary case, the list includes a recommendation list that can be output for display by the programmable TV recorder under control of the processor. If desired, the stored usernames can include both a first group and a second group of stored usernames, the first group and second group being mutually exclusive, while the list includes both a recording schedule and a recommendation list that can be

output for display by the programmable TV recorder under control of the processor, in that case, the recommendation is output to the recording schedule when the extracted username is in the first stored group of usernames and the recommendation is output to the recommendation list when the extracted username is in the second stored group. In the latter case, the first stored usernames are distinguished from the second stored usernames by a flag associated with each of the first and second stored usernames. [0034] It should be noted that the verification protocol list advantageously could include a "secret" password known only to the owner and other usernames of respective other users within the users circle of friends and relations. It should also be noted that individual usernames in the verification protocol list can be flagged to differentiate recommendations from schedule changes. More specifically, recommended recording events sent by remote users with flagged usernames can be treated as schedule changers, i.e., the recommendation will be entered into the recording schedule, while recommended recording events sent with unflagged usernames will be treated as recommendations, i.e., these latter recommendations must be approved by the owner and only approved recommendations will be entered into the recording schedule. Thus, when a child receives a recommendation on his/her PTR 100B from the PTR 100A with the flagged username "PARENT," that recommendation will be entered into the recording schedule without approval. On the other hand, a recommendation from the PTR 100N accompanied by an unflagged username "CASUAL FRIEND" will be presented to the owner of the PTR 100B for approval.

This text says nothing about the a keyword or a confidential flag much less performing a check where the confidential flag indicates the permission of the first user recited in claims 4 and 11.

It is submitted that claims 4 and 11 are patentably distinctive for the reasons discussed above.

VIII. Conclusion:

In view of the law and facts stated herein, the Appellant respectfully submits that reasoning and the references cited by the Examiner are insufficient to maintain either a non-enablement rejection or an obviousness rejection of the claims. Appellant respectfully urges that the rejections of claims 1-6, 8-14, and 16-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) are improper. Reversal of the rejections in this appeal is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees required in connection with the filing of the Appeal Brief to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: August 15, 2007

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IX. Claims Appendix (37 CFR § 41.37(c)(1)(viii))**1. An information browse method comprising:**

a first search condition information setting step of setting a condition, inputted by any one user among a plurality of users, for searching for information suited to a first user, as first search condition information on this first user;

a second search condition information setting step of setting a condition, inputted by any one among the plurality of users in a way that specifies a second user, for searching information suited to this second user, as second search condition information on this second user;

an information searching step of searching, from within browsing target information containing a plurality of information elements, for an information element with respect to a certain user in accordance with information derived from the first search condition information set in said first search condition information setting step and information derived from the second search condition information set in said second search condition information setting step; and

an information presenting step of presenting to the certain user a piece of information corresponding to a searched result with respect to the certain user in said information searching step.

2. An information browse method according to claim 1, wherein said second search condition information setting step involves setting the information inputted in such a form that any one of the plurality of users specifies the second user to establish a mapping to setting user information indicating the user who inputted the information as the second search condition information on the second user, and

said information presenting step involves presenting to a user pieces of information on the respective information elements searched with respect to this second user, and presenting a piece of information indicating a setting user set as one element of mapping by way of the second search condition information with respect to the respective information elements searched based on the second search condition information.

3. An information browse method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a second information searching step of searching, based on the second search condition information set by the certain user with respect to second user in said second search condition information setting step, for an information element suited to this second user from the browsing target information, and checking whether or not the thus searched information element is searched by the first search condition information set in said first search condition information setting step with respect to the second user; and

a second information presenting step of presenting to the certain user a piece of information corresponding to a searched result and a checked result with respect to the certain user in said second information searching step.

4. An information browse method according to claim 3, wherein the first search condition information contains one or more pieces of information consisting of a keyword and a confidential flag for indicating whether or not a permission of using this keyword is given to the second user, and

said second information searching step involves performing the check about the searched information element by use of only the keyword having such a relationship that the confidential flag contained in the first search condition information set in said first search condition information setting step with respect to the second user indicates the permission of the first user.

5. An information browse method according to claim 1, wherein said second search condition information setting step involves generating the second search condition information by analyzing natural language information inputted in such a way that any one of the plurality of users specifies the second user.

6. An information browse method comprising:
a first search condition information setting step of making a server set information inputted by a first user as a search condition corresponding to a first user;
a second search condition information setting step of making said server set information by a second user as a search condition corresponding to a certain user;
a step of receiving from said server a result of searching based on the conditions set corresponding to information derived from the first and second users in said first and second search condition information setting steps.

7. (canceled)

8. An information browse system comprising:

a first search condition information storing unit of storing information, inputted by any one of a plurality of users, for searching for information suited to a first user, as first search condition information on this first user ;

a second search condition information storing unit of storing information, inputted by any second one of the plurality of users in a way that specifies a second user, for searching information suited to this second user, as second search condition information on this second user;

an information searching unit for searching, from within browsing target information containing a plurality of information elements, for an information element with respect to a certain user in accordance with information derived the first search condition information stored in said first search condition information storing unit and information derived the second search condition information stored in said second search condition information storing unit for information retrieval and sharing; and

an information-presenting unit of presenting to the certain user a piece of information corresponding to a searched result with respect to the certain user by said information-searching unit.

9. An information browse method according to claim 6, wherein said second search condition information setting step involves setting the information inputted in such a form that any one of the plurality of users specifies the second user to establish a mapping to setting user information indicating the user who inputted the information as the second search condition information on the second user, and

said information presenting step involves presenting to a user pieces of information on the respective information elements searched with respect to this second user, and presenting a piece of information indicating a setting user set as one element of mapping by way of the second search condition information with respect to the respective information elements searched based on the second search condition information.

10. An information browse method according to claim 9, further comprising:

a second information searching step of searching, based on the second search condition information set by the certain user with respect to second user in said second search condition information setting step, for an information element suited to this second user from the browsing target information, and checking whether or not the thus searched information element is searched by the first search condition information set in said first search condition information setting step with respect to the second user; and

a second information presenting step of presenting to a the certain user a piece of information corresponding to a searched result and a checked result with respect to the certain user in said second information searching step.

11. An information browse method according to claim 10, wherein the first search condition information contains one or more pieces of information consisting of a keyword and a confidential flag for indicating whether or not a permission of using this keyword is given to the second user, and

said second information searching step involves performing the check about the searched information element by use of only the keyword having such a relationship that the confidential flag contained in the first search condition information set in said first search condition information setting step with respect to the second user indicates the permission of the first user.

12. An information browse method according to claim 11, wherein said second search condition information setting step involves generating the second search condition information by analyzing natural language information inputted in such a way that any one of the plurality of users specifies the second user.

13. (canceled)

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. An information browse method according to claim 3, wherein a control unit determines a recommendation degree corresponding to a hit keyword count with respect to each of the searched information elements searched using the first search condition and the second search condition.

17. An information browse method according to claim 16, wherein a recommendation degree is derived using data from a care-for-others information table and/or a favorite information table.

18. An information browse method according to claim 17, wherein a program having a larger hit keyword count in the care-for-others information table takes a larger recommendation degree value.

19. An information browse method according to claim 18, wherein information displayed in a program guide are sorted in a format corresponding to the recommendation degree of each item.

20. An information browse method according to claim 19, wherein said control unit receives electronic mail communications addressed to a logged-in user;

said control unit reads all keywords entered into the favorite information table related to the logged-in user, and further reads all keywords entered into the care-for-others information table related to the logged-in user;

said control unit searches the electronic mail communications for the keywords set in the favorite information table and in the care-for-others information table;

said control unit executes the process of computing the recommendation degree of each of the electronic mail communications wherein the electronic mail communications are displayed according to a format corresponding to the recommendation degree for each item.

X. Evidence Appendix (37 CFR § 41.37(c)(2))

None

XI. Related Proceedings Appendix (37 CFR § 41.37(c)(2))

None